

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 /072 W
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INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 6064

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, PINT, KS
SUBJECT: REACTION TO RELEASE OF EM-9 PRISONERS

REF: SEOUL 5946

1. FIRST REACTION IN PORTTESTANT CIRCLES TO RELEASE OF 14 EM-9 VIOLATORS ON JULY 17 WAS POSITIVE IN SENSE THAT CHURCH LEADERS ACTIVE IN HUMAN RIGHTS STRUGGLE SAW MOVE AS DEFINITE SIGN THAT ROKG WAS SINCERE IN DESIRE TO START RELEASING PRISONERS. HOWEVER, PLEASURE WAS MIXED WITH DISAPPOINTMENT BECAUSE KNCC HAD BEEN UNDER IMPRESSION THAT THREE OR FOUR MYONGDONG PRISONERS RATHER THAN TWO WOULD BE LET GO IN FIRST INSTALLMENT.

2. KNCC EXECUTIVE BOARD ISSUED STATEMENT ON JULY 18 WELCOMING RELEASE BUT AT SAME TIME TRYING TO KEEP SOME PRESSURE ON ROKG BY REQUESTING THAT ROKG LIBERATE ALL VIOLATORS OF EMERGENCY MEASURES IN CUSTODY AS WELL AS THOSE CONVICTED "UNJUSTLY OR INCORRECTLY" OF VIOLATING ANTI-COMMUNIST LAW. IT ALSO DEMANDED THAT PRISONERS BE FREED WITHOUT CONDITION. STATEMENT, WHICH WILL BE REPORTED IN SEPTEL, ALSO ADDRESSED ITSELF TO THREE RESOLUTIONS WHICH HAD BEEN PASSED BY NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN JULY SPECIAL
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SESSION.

3. ASSOCIATION OF FAMILIES OF POLITICAL PRISONERS ISSUED A STATEMENT JULY 18 WHICH WAS MUCH TOUGHER THAN KNCC'S AND ALSO INCLUDED CALL FOR RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY. TEXT WILL BE TRANSMITTED SEPTEL.

4. KNCC TOLD EMBOFF THAT IT WAS HOPEFUL THAT MANY PRISONERS WILL BE RELEASED BY AUGUST 15 AND THAT ALL MIGHT GET OUT BY YEAR'S END. IF SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS ARE NOT RELEASED BY AUGUST 15, KNCC CONTEMPLATES RENEWED CAMPAIGN OF PUBLIC PRESSURE. KNCC BELIEVES ROKG WILL NOT IN FINAL ANALYSIS DEMAND WRITTEN STATEMENTS OF REPETANCE FROM ALL PRISONERS. KNCC SEC GEN KIM KWAN-SUK VISITED AT LEAST TWO MYONGDONG PRISONERS RECENTLY AND WAS SURPRISED AT HOW ADAMANT THEY WERE NOT TO SIGN ANY DOCUMENT AS A CONDITION FOR RELEASE. ONE PRISONER, YI MUN-YONG, REPORTEDLY SAID HE HAD INFORMED ROKG THAT NOT ONLY WOULD HE NEVER SIGN ANY STATEMENT BUT THAT HE WOULD DEFINITELY SPEAK OUT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IF RELEASED.

5. MODERATE HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS WITHIN PROESTANT CHURCHES SEEM WILLING TO EXERCISE MORAL INFLUENCE ON RELEASED PRISONERS IN ATTEMPT TO HAVE THEM RETAIN LOW ENOUGH PROFILE TO AVOID JEOPARDIZING FREEDOM OF THOSE STILL INCARCERATED. OF COURSE, CHURCH LEADERS CANNOT GUARANTEE THAT RELEASED PRISONERS WILL COMPLY, BUT THEY BELIEVE CHANCES ARE FAVORABLE.

6. HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS, HOWEVER, DO NOT WIS TO LOSE INITIATIVE IN THEIR STRUGGLE AND THEY WILL CONTINUE TO PRESSURE ROKG. APPARENTLY, A FIRST TARGET IS TO EXPAND SCOPE OF LENIENCY BEYOND EM-9 VIOLATORS AND TO PUSH CONFIDENTIAL

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ROKG TO FREE DETAINEES WITHOUT CONDITION. PRESSURE WILL ALSO BE EXERTED IN EFFORT TO ASSURE THAT WORLD OPINION NOT BE SATISFIED WITH ROKG HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES UNTIL FULL DEMOCRACY IS RESTORED.
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